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LANG. NOTES vol. v. col. 252), or that it is a kind of vague, unscientific groping in the dark, as Prof. GUMMERE appears to assume in the Introduction to his 'Handbook of Poetics' (page 4), I have never been able to believe. The science of æsthetics presents a range of facts, principles and conceptions as definite at least as are those of philology; and, I may add, the necessity for 'preaching' is about as obvious in the one department of knowledge as in the other. Assuredly if the specialist in philology would gasp and stare at an attempt to explain the origin of writing by, let us say, the principle involved in Ovid, 'Epist.' iv, 10, the specialist in æsthetics may be pardoned a similar breach of manners when he sees a whole body of scholarship upon which he has expended considerable time as student and instructor suddenly dwindle into the tail of a dogma. Why should the scholar be less scrupulous about the scientific character of his working basis when he is discussing the existence of a movable accent in O. H. G.?

I do not, of course, wish to be understood as questioning the scholarship of Prof. FRUIT or of any one else, but simply as protesting against the common assumption that complex problems in aesthetics may be solved out of hand by the application of a 'handy rule' or a 'test question.'

FRED N. SCOTT.

University of Michigan.

BRIEF MENTION.

LECTURES BY PROFESSOR BELL.

We take pleasure in calling the attention of our readers to the following circular letter of Dr. HARRIS, Commissioner of Education:

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BUREAU OF
EDUCATION, WASHINGTON, D. C.

December 10, 1890.

*To Presidents of Colleges and Universities in
the United States:*

It is assumed that language instruction in colleges and universities, so far as it relates to living tongues, is based on the system of "visible speech," invented by Mr. Alexander Melville Bell, and that by its aid the pronunciation of a dialect can be conveyed in writing by one who has learned the sounds, to another person who has never heard the sounds, with reasonable accuracy. The object of this letter

is to state that a rare opportunity is now presented to a limited number of higher educational institutions to avail themselves of the direct teaching of Mr. Bell through a lecture in elucidation of visible speech. All teachers of comparative philology understand this system, but, perhaps, can learn something in regard to the method of teaching it, by seeing the method employed by Mr. Bell himself. I may state that the inventor of this system does not require any compensation for his lecture, but is willing to engage during the coming season, January to June, 1891, to give a free lecture on the subject named. Applications should be addressed to Mr. Alexander Melville Bell, 1525 Thirty-fifth street, N. W., Washington, D. C.

W. T. HARRIS,

Commissioner.

N. B.—In reference to the annexed letter, Mr. Bell begs to state that, for Colleges, etc., near, and to the south of, the District of Columbia, early dates should be selected, and immediate application made, in order that visits may be serially arranged.

In a course of lectures announced by Mr. THOMAS DAVIDSON, 239 W. 105th St., New York, we note the following subjects which are of special interest to workers in modern languages:

- i. *On mediæval subjects:* 1. The Revival of Thought in the Thirteenth Century; 2. The Teachers of Dante; 3. The 'Convivio' of Dante; 4. Dante's Guides in the Spirit World; 5. The 'Nibelungen Lied.'
- ii. *On modern subjects:* 1. Shakespeare's World and its Limitations; 2. Orestes and Hamlet; 3. The Ballads of Scotland (with Readings); 4. The Present State of Thought.

Of these suggestive topics, "The Teachers of Dante" is perhaps the most important, since the writer here endeavors to ascertain just what authors the poet had read and who had exercised a special influence on him. In connection with the growing interest in the study of the *altissimo poeta* in America, we may remark that Mr. DAVIDSON's lectures on Dante last winter at the Brooklyn Institute were attended by an average of three hundred persons, and that a meeting for the organization of the American Dante Society was held at Columbia College, N. Y., on the 28th of November (1890), when Dr. THEODORE W. DWIGHT, President of Yale University, made an address, which was followed by addresses from Drs. M. R. VINCENT, W. T. HARRIS,

PHILIP SCHAFF and Prof. VINCENZO BOTTA. The following announcement preliminary to the meeting was sent out :

For the last twenty-five years, and especially since the appearance of LONGFELLOW'S translation of the *Divine Comedy*, there has been manifested a growing interest in Dante and his works, as well as in the principles and history of Mediæval Christian Civilization, which he tries to sum up in the greatest of these. In order to give depth and direction to this interest, it is proposed to organize an American Dante Society, having its domicile in New York, and chapters or branches in other cities and towns. This Society will endeavor, by means of lectures, discussions, printed publications, etc., to encourage the study of Dante and his world, its religion, art, ethics, politics and philosophy. It is proposed that the Society shall consist of Members and Associate-Members, the former paying \$10.00 a year and forming the directive and executive portion of the Society; the latter paying \$3.00 and enjoying all its benefits, but without a voice in its management. It is further proposed to collect a Library of Dante-Literature, and to dispose it in some public institution, so that it may be accessible to all students. Lastly, it is proposed to publish a Year-Book (somewhat similar to the *Jahrbuch* of the German Dante Society), containing all the important lectures given before the Society, along with original articles and notices of all new Dante-Literature. Of this each member and associate member will receive a copy. About *one hundred and fifty* persons, chiefly from New York and Brooklyn, have already offered to become members of the Society, and it is hoped that it will begin work this winter in these two cities with a series of lectures by distinguished Dante scholars. The following gentlemen, among others, have expressed their willingness to aid the Society: Hon. SETH LOW, LL.D., President of Columbia College; Hon. WM. T. HARRIS, LL.D., Commissioner of Education, Washington, D. C.; Rev. PHILIP SCHAFF, D.D., Union Theological Seminary, New York; Rev. M. R. VINCENT, D.D., Union Theological Seminary, New York; Rev. B. B. TYLER, D.D., Church of the Disciples; Rev. R. HEBER NEWTON, D.D., All Souls' Church; Prof. J. C. MURRAY, LL.D., McGill University, Montreal, Canada; Prof. NICHOLAS MURRAY BUTLER, Ph.D., Columbia College, New York; Prof. H. N. GARDINER, Smith College, Northampton, Mass.

On Dec. 5; the newly organized Dante Society elected the following officers:—President, Dr. Theodore Dwight; Vice-Presidents, Dr. M. R. Vincent, Professor Vincenzo Botta, Dr. Philip Schaff, Dr. Wm. T. Harris, James MacAlister, Superintendent of Drexel Institute,

Philadelphia, and Miss Katherine Hillard; Secretary, Thomas Davidson; Treasurer, Miss Charlotte F. Daly; Directors, the President, Secretary and Treasurer (ex-officio), Dr. Vincent, Dr. B. B. Tyler, Lucius C. Ashly and Irving P. Boyd.

All communications regarding the Society should be sent to the Secretary, Mr. THOMAS DAVIDSON, whose address is given above.

In its program for the season 1890-91, the "Lecture Association of the University of Pennsylvania" have announced a course of six lectures by HJALMAR HJORTH BOYESEN of Columbia College, on "English Poets": Keats, March 17; Shelley, March 20; Byron, March 24; Tennyson, March 27; Robert Browning, March 31; Swinburne and the later Lyrists, April 3. We learn with regret that JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL will not be able to give his course of suggestive lectures on the "Old English Dramatists" as announced by this Association.

The firm of G. J. Göschen have added to their series of school-classics a volume entitled LESSING'S 'Philotas and the Poetry of the Seven Years' War,' edited by Professor O. GÜNTTER. For the purposes of a more extended course in German literature the selections from the poetry of GLEIM, E. V. KLEIST, RAMDER, WILLAMOW, A. L. KARCH, LICHTWER and SCHUBERT, as well as LESSING'S Odes to GLEIM and KLEIST and the Volkslied on the battle of Prague, will be found very useful.

The same firm have published a 'Graphische Litteratur-Fafel' or 'Die Deutsche Litteratur und der Einfluss fremder Litteraturen auf ihren Verlauf, vom Beginn einer schriftlichen Ueberlieferung an bis heute, in graphischer Darstellung,' by Dr. C. FLAISCHLEN. German literature is here delineated as a river with many smaller streams representing foreign material and foreign forms flowing into it. It is, of course, impossible to represent adequately, by a combination of lines and colors, such a complicated process as the growth of a literature, and all attempts in this direction must in a sense be failures, if for no other reason than on account of the practical difficulties of indicating the indirect and permanent effects produced by temporary tendencies. Within the possibilities of graphic representation, however, Dr. FLAISCHLEN has done his work extremely well, while the mechanical execution is excellent and very pleasing to the eye.